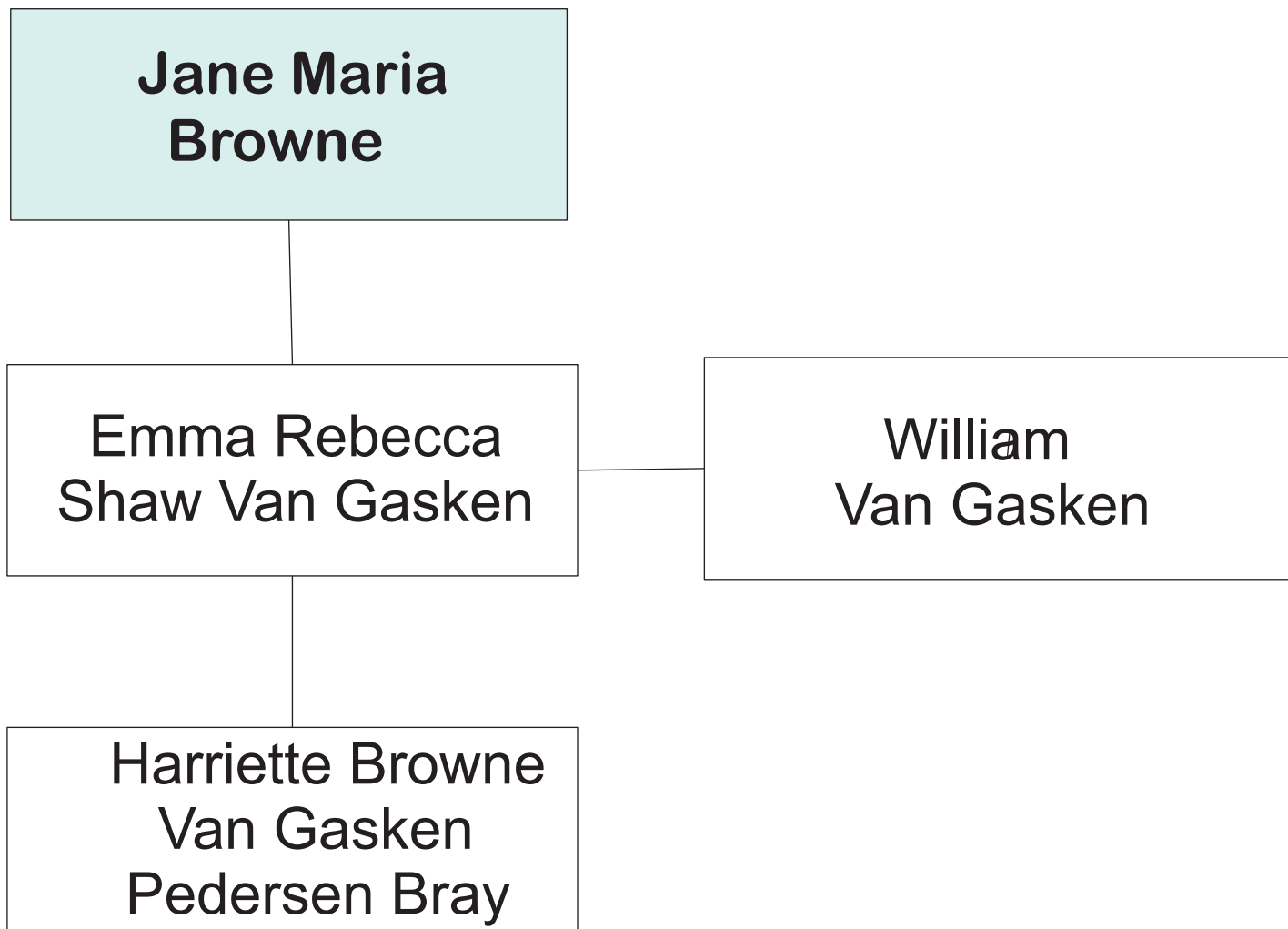


A photograph of a two-story brown wooden house with a brick chimney and a porch, surrounded by greenery and a paved walkway. The house has a prominent brick chimney on the left side and a porch with a white railing. The walkway is paved and curves around the house. There are trees and bushes in the foreground and background.

Van Gasken Interviews

DMHS Pie. I-31-00C



History related be Emma Rebecca Shaw Van Gasken, undated

Jane Maria Browne, 1837 - 1919

Jane Maria Browne was born in Cork, Ireland, May 7, 1837. At the age of 16 she took passage on a sailing vessel, destination New York City, U. S. A., where she expected to meet her brother, Tom Browne.

While on this voyage she met Stephen Shaw who was then mate on the vessel they were sailing. They were married shortly after they reached New York. He was then 27 years of age.

After their marriage they went to Nova Scotia where they built their home in Hantsport on the Bay of Fundy. At the age of 22 years he received his Captains papers and Jane made many voyages with him as was the custom in those days.

To this union was born a family of three sons, (Cyrus, Stephen and John and one daughter Emma Rebecca. Cyrus died in infancy.

After their last trip across the Atlantic Ocean together they were in London, England. From there they made a voyage to Genoa, Italy, where Stephen Shaw and his son John died of typhoid fever in the year 1865. They were buried in one of the old Italian cemeteries in Genoa.

Jane Shaw returned to Hantsport, N. S., and after remaining there for four years decided to move to Chicago. She was in Chicago during the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 where she lost all of her possessions. Her daughter Emma was with her during this very traumatic experience.

Following this disaster she returned to Cork City, Ireland, in the spring, to keep books for her cousin who owned a large brick yard in Cork.

From Ireland she went to Liverpool, England, and while there she met and married Captain W. D. Flemming. They remained for three years.

She made many voyages with her husband and eventually returned to Nova Scotia. From there they went to San Francisco, California, U. S. A.

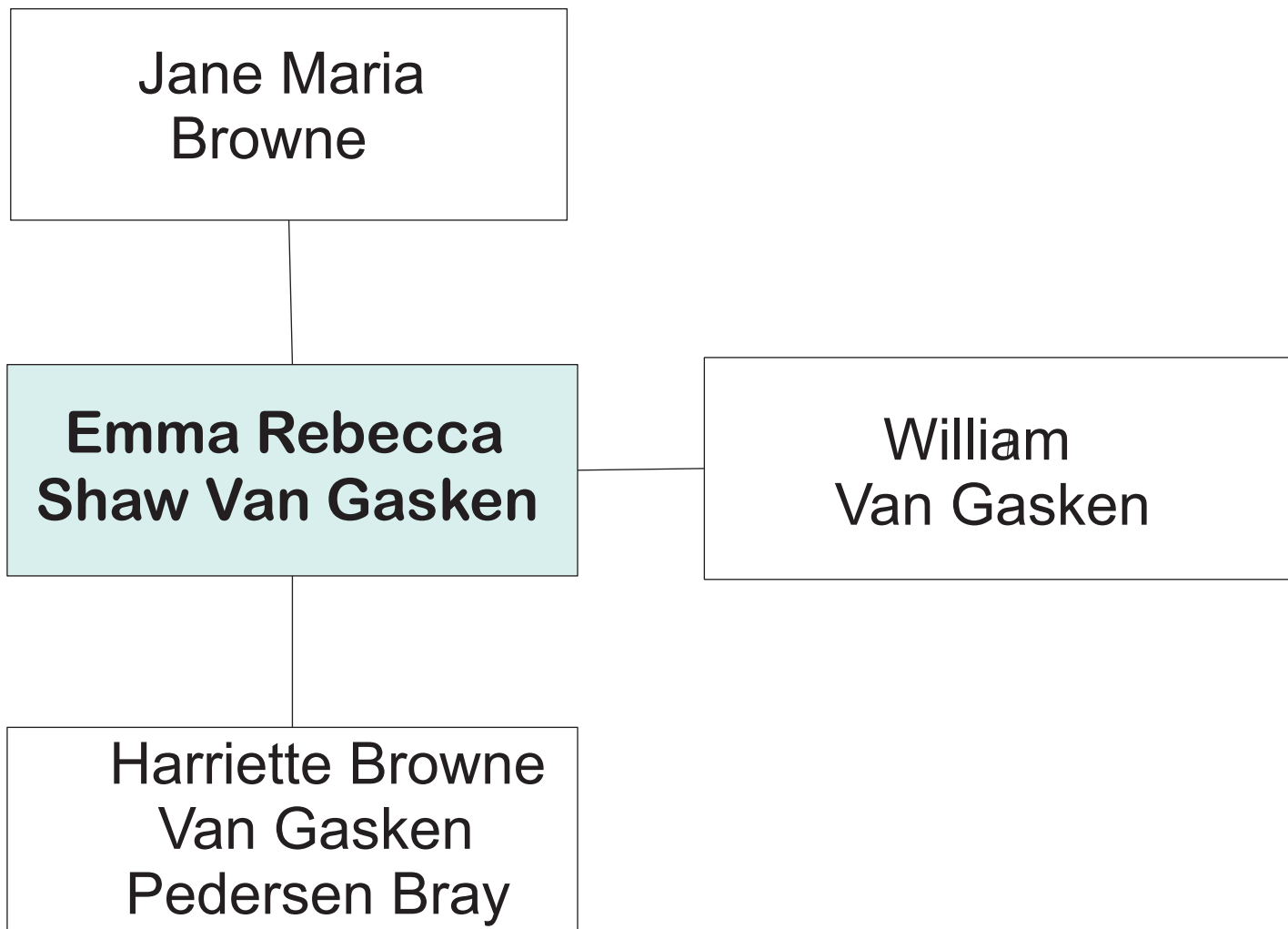
They bought a home in East Oakland and while there Captain Benjamin Shaw, his wife and daughter Leonora, sailed into San Francisco Bay and during their visit another daughter, Grace, was born to the Benjamin Shaws.

Jane Flemming and her husband then moved to Bonners Ferry, Idaho, where they lived for some years. While there they suffered another disastrous fire and again lost almost all of their possessions.

Following the fire they moved to Des Moines, Washington. Captain Flemming died a short time after they arrived in Des Moines. After his death she took a trip with her son, Captain Stephen Shaw, to Honolulu, Hawaii.

During her most eventful life she made 47 voyages across the Atlantic Ocean.

Jane Maria Flemming died in the family home in Des Moines, on March 10, 1919.



Two different sessions.

The first related in 1939

The second related by Harriette Van Gasken Pedersen Bray, undated

Along about the middle of September, 1889, I first came to the city of Des Moines, called by some at that time the "Queen City of the Sound". It was a bright, sunny afternoon and my impression of the very beautiful wooded bluff, the surrounding country with its beaches, its small streams emptying into the Sound, and the Sound itself, was one of great satisfaction, an uplift of quiet and repose.

During the year of '89, the whole Sound was in the throes of a real estate boom, and Des Moines was having its share of publicity, so when we landed from the little boat that brought my husband and me from Tacoma, we did not find quite the quiet that had impressed me from the shoreline. Small buildings were springing up over night and land was selling at a good price---from \$250 to \$500 for a 25 foot lot.

Out from the lumber mill that my husband had just purchased was the dock at which all boats landed. This mill was situated on the site now owned by the Swedish Tabernacle, and up the gulch on the north side was the corduroy road over which was hauled the logs that we cut at the mill. These logs were hauled by oxen, owned by an old Frenchman, quite a character, and the bunk house for the loggers and the single men working at the mill was built just south of the mill. The creek was quite a stream at that time, and running under a small bridge, emptied directly into the Sound. When the salmon were running it was quite a sight to watch the torches flashing through the night while men speared the salmon as they rushed by.

The road leading up to the dock and the mill is the same road as that which is now being used with only a few changes being made by grading, etc. The first large buildings (store, post-office, and hotel) later on the Ely Building, and then owned by a man named Hyatt, was on the bluff just south of the road; and men, coming and going, were often glad of a place to unroll their blankets for the Hotel had very limited accommodations.

My husband found a boarding place for us with a Mr. and Mrs. Blasher, who were really the founders of Des Moines. They had named it for Des Moines, Iowa, their former home. It was while staying with these lovely people that I met Brother Sampson who came over from Tacoma every week-end to hold church services. He was a Methodist minister and a very fine fellow. He always stayed with the Blashers, and as they had brought their piano with them, I often played and sang for them, not only the hymns that they loved, but several of the old songs and some of the new; and none of the partys seemed to enjoy it any more thoroughly than Brother Sampson, who often added a story or two for our entertainment. Now to go back to Mr. and Mrs. Blasher. They lived on the place now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Fisher, the big stucco house. The Blashers had interested eastern people in the townsite and had spent quite a lot of money, only to lose it all, and finally to turn practically everything over to the Des Moines Investment Company, which carried on for a time.

Grand Avenue was laid out, also several cross streets. North of Vashon Avenue on Grand Avenue was the Martin Rooming House, (now owned by Mr. Thompson, but built late in 1889. Also the New Hyatt Hotel, built in 1890---later on this became the Draper Home. Still on Grand Avenue going south were several stores, a plumbing shop and several other small businesses. The building now owned by the Rudbergs was built in October, 1889 by William and Frank Young from Kansas City. Mrs F. Young still lives in Tacoma.

The printing office was located on or about the site of the Bledsoe store; and the band stand (for we had a band or expected to have one) was located nearby. We had a flourishing newspaper edited by a Mr. Thompson, and Miss Addie Pennington was assistant editor at that time, a very pretty and a tremendously popular young lady.

The old school building as I remember it in the winter of '90 and '91, occupied a site northeast of the Carr place. We used to wade through rain and slush to attend the Literary Society meetings. At the Literary

Club gatherings we enjoyed many pleasant evenings, the entertainment was good and ever so many funny incidents occurred. I do not know the year when the new school was built but I do remember that when I brought my boys out from Idaho some eight years later for their vacation, the new building was then being occupied as school and church and for community gatherings.

The town had grown some and the buildings seemed more permanent, but Des Moines was not booming then. It was suffering from its too sudden expansion and the whole Sound country was having a relapse. But we used to enjoy our vacations in Des Moines. The beaches were all free and many had boats, and like one big family, we picnicked, had beach fire and other friendly gatherings. Even Three Tree Point was open to us and many families from Kent camped with us.

I suppose you can hardly realize it, but when I first came to Des Moines there was lots of fine standing timber and enormous stumps waiting to be cleared, both on the building lots and in the streets. I have a piece of cherry paneling that was given me in 1912 that was cut from a large wild cherry tree standing in one of the streets as late as 1

My home was built in the winter of '89 and '90 and stood amid great stumps that had to be cleared. During that same year (1890) a movement was afoot to incorporate the City of Des Moines. A mayor and city council were selected but the project fell through. (The action taken under the territory was not valid in the newly formed state and was not repeated later) Later on the land boom blew up. Lumber fell to the lowest price ever known on the Sound, and many moved away, my husband and I among them.

We returned to Des Moines from Idaho in 1910 and have been happy to make our home here ever since. Zenith had established herself and many new homes had been added in our absence. The new dock was being used, located where the few piles now stand, and boats made regular trips to Seattle and Tacoma, still our only mode of travel.

The Commercial Club had built their new building, now the Odd Fellows Hall, and sidewalks had been laid on many of the streets. Several new societies had been organized, one of which I wish to mention particularly. That was the Enterprise Society. This was composed of a group of very fine women, energetic and willing to do anything necessary to make the town a better place to live in. I liked the spirit and soon joined them.

It was the Enterprise Society that first conceived the idea of a community building. By giving dinners, making quilts, and selling them, and giving entertainments of various sorts, they finally got together the money to start the building. The men donated the labor and women even helped with hammer and saw. I remember helping paint the outside of the building myself so that the building could be completed before we gave our last dinner for this purpose.

This is the very community building which we now occupy, now quite so large or so comfortable as it is now, of course, for a few years later during the World War, the Red Cross added a room to the south for hospital and war aid purposes.

As time went on this building was remodeled and it was decided to change the name of the good old Enterprise Society and call it the Community Club.

We are still living in Des Moines and we love it.

May 1st, 1939

Mrs. Emma Van Gasken

Emma Rebecca Shaw Van Gosken

I was born in London, England on December 13, 1864. My father was Stephen Shaw of Hantsport, Nova Scotia, and my Mother was Jane, Maria Browne Shaw of Cork, Ireland.

I was baptised in one of the oldest churches in England, St. Mary's Rotherite Episcopalian Church, when I was one month old. To be born within the sound of Bow Bells made one a true Londoner for St. Mary's Le Bow is within the mile square of the old City of London.

My parents sailed for America via Genoa, Italy, on the LaGlorie of which my father was captain, taking with them my brothers John and Stephen and myself. The two boys and my father were taken ill with typhoid fever. Both my father and brother John died there and were buried in one of the old Italian cemeteries.

A new captain came on board the ship and sailed it to Montreal with my mother, brother Stephen and myself aboard.

A trip by train took us to Hantsport, Nova Scotia, where we lived until I was four years old. We then moved to Chicago, Ill., in time to experience the great Chicago fire of 1877.

We left the United States and sailed to Cork, Ireland, where my mother kept books for her cousin, Ellen Ormond, who owned a large brick yard in Cork.

Later we moved to Liverpool, England, where my mother met Captain Wm. Flemming and they were married.

While on their wedding trip they left me with Mr. and Mrs. Gibson, in Liverpool. They were very fond of me and Mr. Gibson used to call me to his knee and call me his "wee wee." He was a very fine singer and taught me many "auld Scotch" songs.

When I was ten years old we sailed for the United States, landing at Charlestown, S. C. My mother and step father were traveling a great deal and I was sent to the home of my step father's people, the Flemmings, of Holly Village, Nova Scotia, for three years.

My brother Stephen went to work for my Uncle, Mark Shaw, of New York City, sailing from the East Coast and eventually making San Francisco, California, his home port.

We moved to East Oakland where I was able to take some art courses as well as learning a more practical skill of operating a typewriter.

San Francisco offered wonderful theatre and musical comedy was the delight of my brother and I. I played the piano and guitar and Steve played the banjo. We sang a bit and enjoyed our evenings "at home" to the tune of many of our Gilbert and Sullivan favorites.

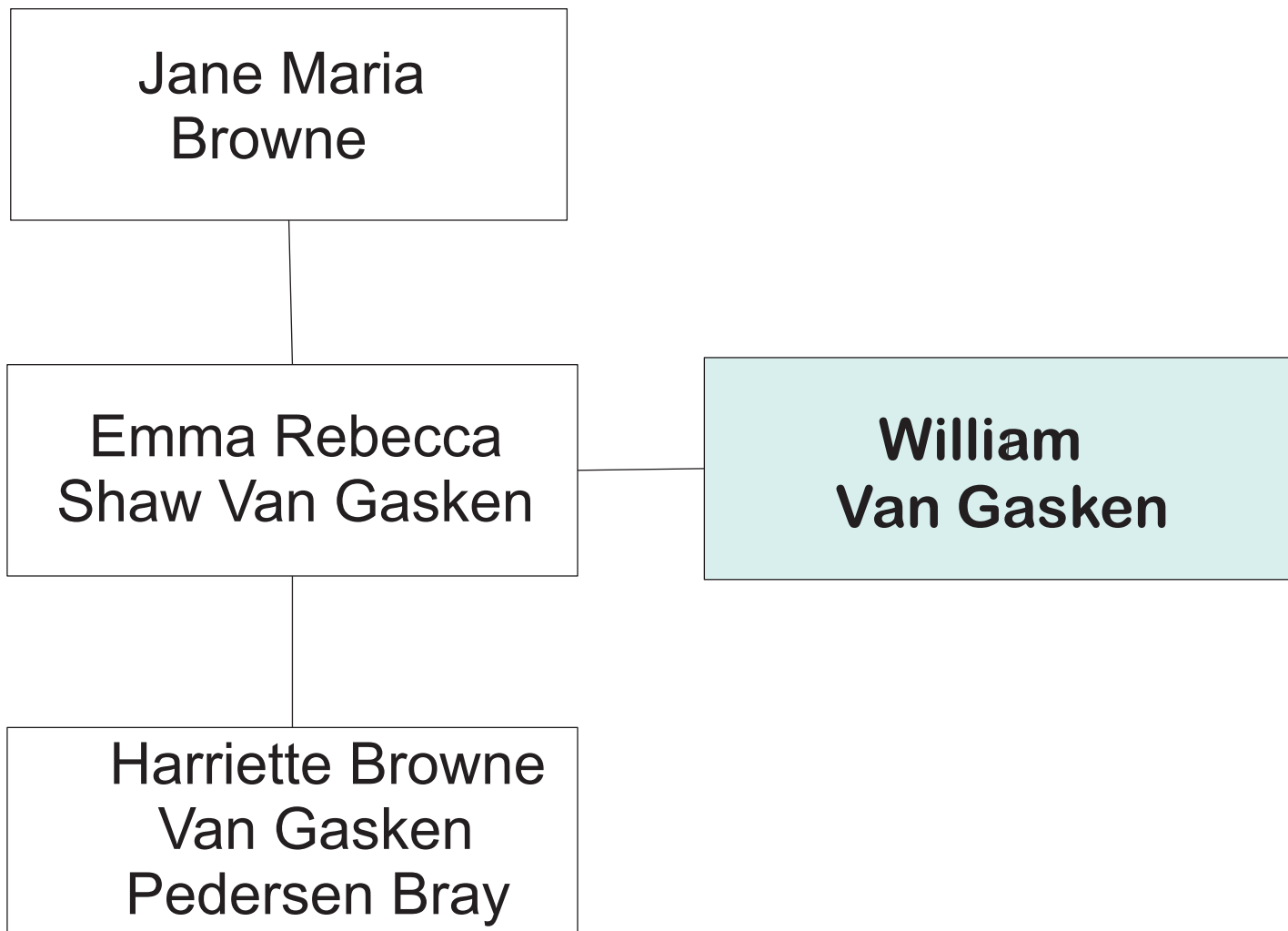
A trip to the Hawaiian Islands aboard a sailing schooner as the guest of Captain and Mrs. Wiley was one of the highlights of my girlhood. The Islands were a veritable Paradise. The brief crossing was offset by a long voyage of 68 days returning to the mainland but nothing has dimmed my memory of that wonderful trip.

I met my husband, William Van Gasken, aboard the Schooner Geo. W. Elder traveling from Port Townsend to San Francisco in the fall of 1887. We were married in East Oakland in December of 1888, moving to Tacoma, Washington in 1889. My husband owned and operated a mill in Des Moines and built the home which has remained a family residence in the winter of 1889 - 1890.

William Pullman, our eldest son, was born in my Mother's home in Oakland and the three younger children, John Shaw, Mark Evald and Harriette Browne, were born in Bonners Ferry, Idaho. Mr. Van Gasken operated a general merchandise store, the Kootenai Trading Company, there for many years.

We returned to Des Moines in 1910. Our home here overlooks a beautiful bay in Puget Sound with a view of Tacoma, Maury and Vashon Islands, Mount Rainier and the Olympic Mountains.

Emma Van Gasken remained in her own home until her death, January 29, 1957.



Related by Emma Rebecca Shaw Van Gasken, undated

WILLIAM VAN GASKEN

William Van Gasken, son of John Van Gasken and Harriet Evaul, boan October 19, 1854, at Smyrna, Deleware, where he received his education that enabled him to teach in the local schools at the age of 15. Later, in the year 1869, having saved enough money from teaching for this grip, he traveled to Corinne, Utah, the rail head at that time.

Applying for work he finally realized the guns in the holster were not impressing prospective employers. He left the two in his hotel room and immediately was hired. His employer was freighting with mules, having had no experience with the latter he was hired on as cook.

He went in to business in Miles City, Montana, with a Mr. Vandenburg, marketing and raising cattle. He remained in this area until the early 1880's.

He told of visiting the site of the Battle of the Little Big Horn River, known as "Custer's Last Stand" in the year 1877, one year to the day following the massacre.

Sometime in the mid 1880's William sailed to southeastern Alaska where he was looking for business opportunities, Indian trading and agricultural oppertunities. A fter moderate success in Alaska he came to the Northwest, where he met Emma Rebecca Shaw, aboard the Schooner George W. Eldern traveling from Port Townsend to San Francisco, in the fall of 1887. They were married in East Oakland, California, December of 1888. They settled immediately in Des Moines, Washington, where William operated a saw mill until 1892.

In 1892 he was forced to sell this mill because of the depression which affected the whole area. It was during the winter of 1889-1890 that he built the family home for Jane Fleming, his wife's Mother. This house has been the home of the Van Gasken family for four generations.

William moved his family to Bonners Ferry, Idaho, where he operated the Kootenai Trading Company from 1892 to 1910, when returned to the family home in Des Moines and he

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became an active resident of that area. It was during the years 1910 to 1917 that he organized the local farmers by transporting their produce by wagon to the Pike Place Market in Seattle, rising at 2 A.M. of a morning in order to be in the city when the market opened, returning to Des Moines in the wee small hours of the following day.

In 1914, having acquired a Model "T" Ford, he and Emma made a trip back to Bonners Ferry, Idaho. His earlier experience driving mules and horses failed him in coping with the Ford.

He enlisted his son Jack to drive the car thru Seattle and on to Issaquah, feeling safe to manage the rest of the trip. The two set out, camping along the way. Experiences were many and sometimes hilarious, including backing the car uphill when gas was low.

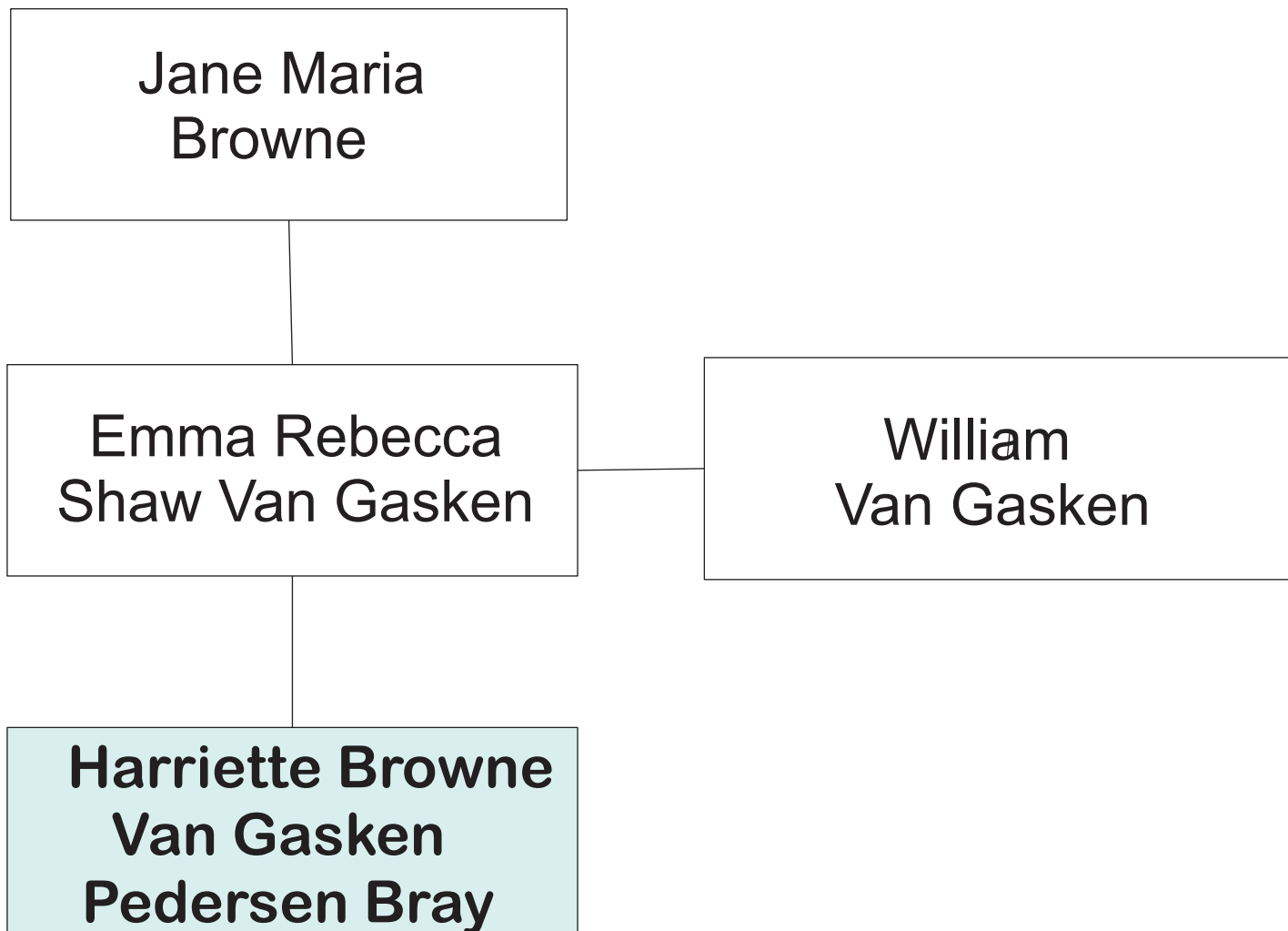
It was in 1917 he obtained work in Ames Shipyard, on what is now known as Harbor Island. He worked there a short time and he was struck by a car, receiving injuries that were lingering.

In the spring of 1928 William moved with his wife and eldest son, Pullman, to operate a general store and garage in Malo, Washington. They remained there until early spring of 1919 when illness forced them to return to the Des Moines area..

He remained a semi-active resident of Des Moines until his death in the family home August 15, 1934.

of the depression which affected the whole area. It was during the winter of 1930-1931 that he built the family home for Jack Fleming, his wife's mother. This house has been the home of the Van Gaster family for four generations.

William moved his family to Bonners Ferry, Idaho, where he operated the Regional Trading Company from 1922 to 1930, when returned to the family home in Des Moines and be-



Related by Harriette Van Gasken Pedersen Bray to Carmen Scott, 1988

HB: My name is Harriet Bray, and I'm descended from the Van Gaskens that built the house which is still standing at 402 So. 222nd Street, in Des Moines, Wa.

CS: And you are a daughter?

HB: I'm a daughter of the builder, a granddaughter of Jane Fleming, for whom the house was built. The house was built from the material supplied by the mill which was situated a little West and to the North on the beach. The house was built of the untrimmed 1 x 12 boards. Its very sturdy, but beware when you try remodeling. It is full cut. A 2 x 6 is a little larger, rather than less as it would be cut now; so you have all kinds of problems.

CS: The mill was the William Van Gasken Mill?

HB: At that time. He bought that...he bought the mill as a going concern, and operated it until 1892, when the boom in Puget Sound...the bubble burst... and instead of lots selling for \$250 - \$500. for a 25 foot lot, they were going for MUCH less, and no one wanted them anyway. My mother talked about, and wrote about, coming to this community by boat, and her impression was that it was a beautifully wooded, lovely area. As she she got nearer, her impressions were that there were lots of stumps, cut and left raw, that would have to be cleared in order to build streets, and in order to build a house on this location, which is what they planned to do.

CS: The house was built for your mother?

HB: No, for my grandmother. Now, this is conjecture... looking back and thinking back...She was a Shaw. My Grandmother was married twice, her first husband was Captain Shaw, the 2nd husband was Fleming. She was born Jane Brown, in Cork, Ireland. She left there at about age 16, and led a very adventuresome life. In fact I have something of hers that I am very proud of... a sampler that she completed when she was eight years old. I couldn't do it now, (such fine stitchery), its my pride and joy.

CS: You are saying that this house was not built for Mr. and Mrs. William Van Gasken?

HB: It was built for Jane Fleming

CS: Did she come here before they did?

HB: No, she came with them, but she evidently had more money at that time. She must have .

CS: So your parents, the Van Gaskens, did not live here at first?

HB: No, not at first.

CS: Were they somewhere nearby?

HB: Yes, at the Blasher property, which was directly East of this house, across the street, where the apartments are now. They lived with the Blashers while the house was being built. Later it was my parent's home too, because my grandmother lived with my parents most of her life, after the husband died.

CS: Was there a Mr. Fleming when this house was being built?

HB: Yes, there was at that time.

CS: Your parents moved in with your grandmother after Mr. Fleming died?

HB: I can't say for sure. They came back to this house from Idaho. And my mother had brought my brothers, who are older than I, out here every summer for several years while we lived away. They kind of camped here in the house, it was livable.

CS: Was your grandmother with you in Idaho.

HB: I can't say. She was very much a part of the family.

CS: Do you recall Mr. Fleming's first name?

HB: William

CS: I may be able to find old records showing his existence here.

HB: He died either shortly after the house was built, or after they came back from Idaho. I don't really know which.

HB: (Looking through some photos) Apparently what everyone did for fun was picnic (looking at photo of several people on an enormous log on the beach below the house)

CS: Oh- thats a huge log, its right down here on the beach?

HB: Yes

CS: You know who the people are?

HB: That's my grandmother, that is myself, my brother, and a visiting cousin.

CS: How old were you

HB: About six.

CS: And when were you born?

HB: 1905.

CS: So this is about 1910 or 1911?

HB: Yes....So that establishes the fact that my grandmother is at the coast with the family, doesn't it. In the meantime she had been at Bonners Ferry and lived on a ranch out of town

HB: You asked about electricity, I couldn't find anything specific, but I imagine it came about 1915- 1916, not later than 1917.

CS: You mentioned picnicing, can you elaborate?

HB: Well that was the recreation, was to have a clambake and sing-a-long on the beach, build a great big fire, and the whole community entered into it.

CS: At a specific place or anywhere along the beach?

HB: Oh, I think most anyplace...people didn't live on the beach ... there were shingle mills, and so on, down there. If you've been here when the tide's out, you know it's wonderful clamming. The Indians had taken advantage of it before our people. If you dig down any distance on our property you'll find layers of clam shells. We're pretty sure the Indians picniced and camped here, came over from the valley.

CS: Are you talking about up here on top of the bluff?

HB: Yes, because they took the higher ground for camping; as I recall as a child, you found the same type of thing up on the slope across this Covenant Beach gulch, and also below at the creek. Its just part of our culture.

CS: Well, the high land would give them a better look at anyone approaching on the water or along the beach, and across the water too.

HB: That's right

CS: We left the Indians when we left Idaho, there was a tribe close there. My parents were quite well acquainted with some of the more reliable ones. The Cootenay tribe. We left there in 1910 and returned here.

CS: Was the mill here when you came back in 1910

HB: It was not in operation

CS: The buildings were there?

HB: Yes

CS: Had the hillside been sluiced down and the millpond filled?

- HB: No, it had not happened yet, I suppose that must have been in the mid 1920s...based on when I finished highschool and began working. I recall working at the time this was happening. My Dad had given permission to sluice, and it seemed it was getting a little touch-and-go whether maybe the house was going to go also. I was working in the prosecuting attorney's office in Seattle, and got an opinion from them, and they thought it was time to stop the sluicing. This took quite a long while to happen. I recall sounding the alarm in about 1928, after the sluicing had been going on for quite some time. I hope I'm remembering the dates accurately.
- CS: Can you tell me anything about the mill building that became the dance hall?
- HB: Just that it was. They must have built a platform that became the dance floor, because I have an old photo of people picnicing on the beach below it, and you can see the lower framework. The lower part was bare bones, you went up stairs to the dance floor.
- CS: Do you picture your age at that time?
- HB: I was about 14, 15, 16 At some point I think they added a lunchroom. I know there was a lunchroom, but I'm not sure in what part of the building.
- CS: Did people approach it from the south on Cliff Avenue? I can remember an old narrow road going up the North bank too
- HB: I think mainly from Cliff Ave. Although they did have to use the road up the North bank at one point, I remember horse and buggys, and later cars on it.
- CS: Can you picture arriving in 1910?
- HB: We came in by boat from Tacoma. The only road back then would have been down into the valley, and that would have been with a team.
- CS: Was that near where the Kent-Des Moines road is now, or near 216th Street?
- HB: 216th. But I don't have a vivid recollection of it.
- CS: Where did you attend school?
- HB: In Des Moines, except my last year of highschool we went to Kent. Two years later we would have gone to Highline, but my particular classmates graduated from Kent, and perhaps the class of 1924 too.

CS: Hadn't there been earlier classes graduating in Des Moines?

HB: Oh, yes.

CS: Why did that change?

HB: Low enrollment, not enough students. I think there may have been no more than twenty in the entire highschool. I could be wrong about the number, it may be too low.

CS: What were the streets like in town when you came in 1910? Were there cars yet?

HB: Oh no.

CS: Horse and Buggies?

HB: yes, and cows. I recall walking along very well, after dark, and a cow suddenly decided that I was getting a little too close; I think I must have run all the way home, screaming. I do recall being frightened. This was so rural and primitive.

CS: How were the roads when it rained? Did it rain then as it does now?

HB: We walked almost everyplace I went. Just up the street and over a block and right up to the school. I didn't have to go far. I had high-topped shoes, laced all the way up. I don't recall any harrowing experiences. It did rain then just as much as it does now. I do have a photo of a very early bus, and a team of horses hitched to it to pull it out of the mud. When a horse team was not handy, you got out and pushed. I didn't, but my Dad talked about it.

CS: What were the attitudes about what a proper little girl could or should not do?

HB: Look, here, this answers you pretty well, all Summer long, that's the way I dressed, Overalls. (Looking at a photo of four young girls, all in bib overalls)

CS: It almost looks like a uniform, everyone is in an identical outfit.

HB: These are my very dear closest friends. These two were neighbors right over here, and their grandmother lived there, and they spent the summer with their grandmother. And this was my sister-in-laws younger sister.

CS: And you look like you might have been 11 or 12 or 13 years old. Was it difficult to buy clothing, was much available, or was it sewn at home?

HB: There was nothing in Des Moines, you went into Seattle, and my mother sewed quite a bit, but I don't think she ever did overalls for me. I think they were purchased.

CS: What shoes would you wear with them, or would you be barefoot?

HB: In the summer, as often as I could, I went barefoot. We could run up and down the sandbank, it was all exposed here and the sun really warmed that up. We could trot down there and out onto the beach, and it never bothered us a bit. I think the soles of our feet were slightly leatherish.

CS: Did you ever find artifacts on the beach, or things from shipwrecks?

HB: No. There was a boat that was burned down there, later, but that was just burned for scrap. I'm sure you've seen pictures of that.

CS: I've seen pictures of a boat aground, North of where the marina is now, quite a large boat.

HB: Yes, they beached it deliberately and burned it for scrap.

CS: Why did they choose that location? Did someone here in town have a particular interest in it?

HB: Not that I know of,

CS: How far North was it?

HB: You can drive onto the beach from the front of Covenant Beach, a very shallow beach, within a block of there. Easy to get at the scrap without any difficulty.

HB: (Looking at more photos) This is her royal highness.

CS: When you say that, who do you mean?

HB: Me (Laughing) I was the youngest in the family

CS: You are in front of the barn which was on the edge of the bluff to the North of this house, the one that shows up in photos taken from the sawmill on the beach. I see a very fancy buggy in the barn with pleated leather upholstered seats.

HB: Well, Dad had a horse and wagon, and a buggy. He was one of the ones who went in to the Pike Place Market after they established it. He would go in at 2:00 or 2:30 a.m. and arrive home about 8:00 p.m.

CS: Why didn't he just go over the hill to Kent for produce?

HB: He was taking produce in to the market, to sell it.

CS: What did he take to market?

HB: Chickens, was one thing. I remember that well.

CS: You helped feed them, or gather eggs?

HB: I helped pluck them. I would come home from school and help with that chore.

Besides the chickens, my Dad took in produce from some of the farmers around here. Those who couldn't go in by themselves. He kind of ran a little co-op. Then the market people said you can't do that. He didn't raise enough on his own, so that ended that episode.

CS: It appears from early photos that there were berry farms, and perhaps other crops being raised in Des Moines

HB: Dad had a berry farm where Judson park is now. That was a piece of family property, it belonged to my grandmother. He raised strawberries there, I recall I was supposed to help with the harvest.

CS: Was that a way for children to earn a little pin money?

HB: I don't ever recall being paid for it. Oh yes, I do too, berries were a cash crop. Its all so long ago.

CS: Did you always live around here?

HB: I lived in Seattle for a while after I married, but my Dad was ill, in and out of the hospital. So we had to be nearby. When Dad died my first boy was just a baby, 1934. The whole responsibility became ours. We were staying nearby, and later moved into this house.

CS: When we first met, the other day, I mentioned a crippled gentleman who had boats for rent, at the moment I don't recall his name.

HB: Mike Young

CS: You said that he lived in the old two-story house that is across the street, to the East, of Overlook park. The one with the big chestnut tree in the front yard. Do you know if that house might have been a boarding house at any time?

HB: I don't know. It was a family residence for Mike, and later owned by Jones, the butcher. He was quite a character, We called him "calf" Jones. He butchered veal and pork and brought it around, and it was a great help, because you didn't have that much fresh meat.

CS: Did he have a store?

HB: No, he sold it right out of the back of a little wagon.

CS: We haven't touched on the summer cabins and resorts. What do you recall of them?

HB: My friend Alice Lord might be able to help you. I don't recall much about that. Vernon Draper might know more. If you went just north of what became Covenant Beach, there were and are old summer cottages, and people from Kent seemed to particularly like that area. They came year after year. I recall, during the years of the ferry, taking it to Vashon for the Strawberry festival over there. That was a big deal. The ferry used the dock at 227th Street in Des Moines

(The tape was turned off while we looked at clippings and more photos, then we resumed)

CS: You are showing me a photograph of eight girls, of about Junior Highschool age, dressed in white nurses gowns and caps

HB: It is a campfire group, and we were evidently being very patriotic (during World War I)

CS: Do you recall how you helped?

HB: You went to the community club, which was at that time down on Grand Ave. and rolled bandages. The building was later moved, and now its completely gone. The Enterprise Club had started the building, and during the War, added a room on to the south of it, for a hospital and war aid purposes.

CS: You've also shown me an old newspaper article about "Captain Charley" Knutson. What can you tell me about him.

HB: Let's talk about the flag first

CS: Okay

HB: I'd like to get it out and show it to you. Flags take a terrible beating on board ship, they have to be flown. This (the field of blue) is the part that has changed so much, see each star is stiched on by hand. They simply cut out and added new parts to the field as necessary when the number of stars changed. There are forty-two stars on it now, in staggered rows. It was in the effects of my uncle, Captain Stephen B. Shaw

CS: And you feel it is at least 100 years old now.

HB: I'm sure of that, because he's been gone. His last commission was during the first war, and it had been modified at earlier times. Notice the fine work applying the stars, both sides

HB: (continued) were appliqued, stitched by hand.

I would love to see it be used during our centennial

CS: It would be wonderful if we could find a way to safeguard it from fading or damage

CS: We're on a new subject now: you are giving me some typed pages which your mother typed long ago

HB: Yes, Emma Van Gasken; she typed it on May 1, 1939

HB: My grandmother was Jane Brown, then married to Shaw, then widowed, then married to Fleming. I'll give you this copy of her story, she was a very interesting lady.

CS: (Back on the subject of Fisherman Charlie)
Was there much about him that was connected to Des Moines?

HB: He was a story teller, and very much of an institution in Des Moines. He lived in a little cabin on the waterfront, it was North of what became Covenant Beach, at the next little creek (through what is presently the Cook property.) We always called it Fisherman's shack...that's where he was when I was little. He was so kind, and good to all of us, he showed us how to fish, and baited our hooks, he was just a very gentlemanly person. We felt very confident about him. In the later years, he developed the habit of liking a little nip now and then. He found out that my mother had always kept what my Dad called "Mary Monahon" for medicinal purposes. There always was that bottle of alcohol in the house. I don't know if it was really liquor or medicine, anyway... Charlie knew we had it, and on occasion would appear at our door, "very ill," and in need of medication.

CS: Did any of the 13 earlier wives live with him?

HB: No, he was a bachelor... and this was always so delightful about him, that he could spin these yarns, and you just accepted them. All built around his adventuring in the South Pacific. I can't think of him without the kindest thoughts. He was interviewed by the papers a number of times.

CS: (another topic) Looking at the photos of the eight girls in the Red Cross outfits

HB: In the first row (left to right) Harriet Van Gasken, Rose Miles, two unknowns: 2nd Row, Rose Miles' older sister, unknown, Helen Turner, Sigrid Jacobson: Taken across the street from the Oddfellows Hall at the recreation park/ baseball diamond. I think the building in the background was one of the Elsey's homes. Probably taken in 1919 or 1920. This was a Campfire activity, and Harriet Van Gasken's sister-in-law, Gladys Van Gasken, was guardian for the group.